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BRIEFS AND COMMENTS

POLAND: The Gdansk Demonstration

The Polish regime will try to turn ceremonies tomorrow and Wednesday commemorating workers killed in the 1970 riots into a show of national unity and, at a minimum, will seek to keep them from taking on the antiregime character they have had in previous years. [redacted]

The event being marked is highly symbolic and emotion-laden for workers on the Baltic Coast. The riots in 1970 forced a change in party leadership, and workers were never satisfied that the then-new Gierek regime fully investigated the deaths, accepted responsibility for them, or punished those involved for the use of force. [redacted]

In recent years, the anniversary has drawn increasingly large crowds. This year ceremonies will be held throughout the country. The main ceremonies--to be held tomorrow in Gdansk--will dedicate three huge crosses as a monument to the slain and could attract 1 million people. Erection of the monument was one of the demands of the Gdansk strikers in August. [redacted]

The Kania regime probably feels it must participate to bolster its claim that it is seeking a partnership with society to solve Poland's problems, to control better what happens in the ceremonies, and to show Moscow that it is making efforts to regain control. [redacted]

Poland's allies will watch the ceremonies closely for signs of the nationalistic and allegedly antisocialist trends in Poland that so concern them. The Soviets--apprehensive about any large popular demonstration not initiated by the Communist Party--will probably be annoyed about a demonstration to commemorate rioting workers killed by a Communist regime. [redacted]

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Poland's hardline critics, moreover, may not view the party's participation as a step toward reasserting its control but as an additional example of the Kania regime's catering to the workers. [REDACTED]

It is possible that Moscow has urged Kania to eschew party participation or to cancel the ceremonies. Kania would have responded to any pressure for cancellation by arguing that this would almost certainly cause serious civil disturbances, an admission that might only strengthen Soviet fears about the party's weakened position. [REDACTED]

The regime will be represented at the ceremonies by President Jablonski, several members of the Council of Ministers, the Gdansk party first secretary and governor, the commander of the Polish Navy, and possibly officials from other provinces. The local television station will carry the ceremonies live, but national television will carry only a brief report. [REDACTED]

The regime probably will leave crowd control to the workers and the Church. Both groups have shown competence in this--the workers during the strikes earlier this year, and the Church during the Papal visit last year. [REDACTED]

Representatives of both Solidarity and the Church are aware of the potential of such a mass meeting in the current situation. They will be counting on attendees to show restraint and to recall that previous violent confrontations with the regime have gained them little. [REDACTED]

The situation could get out of control, however, if radicals in Solidarity and the dissident movement seek to use the ceremonies to bring additional pressure on the regime. In that event, the regime might be forced to use the police and, if necessary, the military to reestablish order. [REDACTED]